

March 23,2017

Appropriations Committee- Public Hearing

I stand before you here today to tell you my story. I stand here, not as an Ability Beyond employee, although I am one, but as a family member who experienced a tragic loss. A loss due to lack of human services, a loss due to lack of societal understanding and a loss... due to the lack of monies available to someone in dire need.

David Weinstein was not only mentally ill, but had an addiction that controlled my life. I grew up with his behaviors, so I knew no other way. I loved him. He fought against his disease furiously and passionately, but at times it took more than him fighting.

David needed constant care, supervision and ultimately all services needed to help him navigate through his illness. Over the years, my family would hear from provider after provider that the services he needed -- medicine to help him and programs to support him were no longer viable due to the state of CT budget cuts. Every year we would lobby against these

funding cuts and fight for David. Although, family supports helped band-aid some of these losses so David was cared for, these supports ended seven years ago. David called me saying that his insurance company would **no longer accept a medication** prescription that had been helping him because the funding for this particular medicine had been part of a grant, and this grant had stopped. -DMHAS service were stopped, and he was now left alone. Alone with an illness. Alone with no solutions.

I spoke to my father, David Weinstein, for the last time on May 10, as two days later my father lost his life. I lost my dad. My mother lost her loved one, his granddaughter lost her chance to meet her grandfather. This loss did not have to happen. This loss was not a loss of just our family, but a loss to this state. Families living in the state of CT – one of the wealthiest states in the country are losing people we love because we don't have services they need, programs they require and care they deserve. I stand here before you today not only as an employee with a full heart for the people we serve, but as a daughter with

a broken heart for the loss of her father. My father's loss was not in vain. I decided on that day -- any chance I got-- any podium I stood in front of and any person who would listen to me would hear my story, because I am not alone. We cannot lose this fight.

I thank you for your time in listening to all of our stories, and support *you* in *your* fight to help others win their battles, restore our funding and protect our citizens.

Thank You,

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